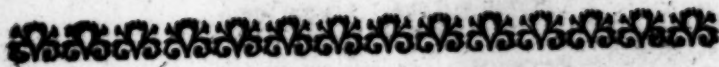


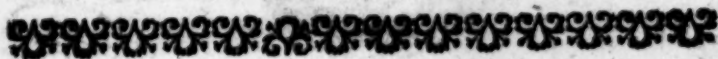
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THE VOICE OF GOD.

BEING

SERIOUS THOUGHTS, &c.



THE
VOICE OF GOD.

BEING

SERIOUS THOUGHTS

ON THE
ALARMING CRISIS

WITH

AN APPROPRIATE
ADDRESS TO THE
SINGERS OF AMERICA
BEING

SOME NEW HINTS, CONCERNING THE
SINGING OF AMERICA

ON THE
SINGING OF AMERICA

CHURCH AND STATE

SINGERS OF AMERICA
SINGERS OF AMERICA

L O N D O N

Printed and sold by M. L. L. No. 1. P. 1.

WINTER HOUSE, MANCHESTER

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B E I N G
S E R I O U S T H O U G H T S
O N T H E P R E S E N T
A L A R M I N G C R I S I S:

W I T H -

An APPEAL to the NATION in general; particularly addressed to the CHRISTIAN WORLD, respecting the unhappy Situation of Affairs between ENGLAND and the AMERICAN COLONIES.

A L S O,

Some few HINTS, humbly offered, for an immediate Remedy.

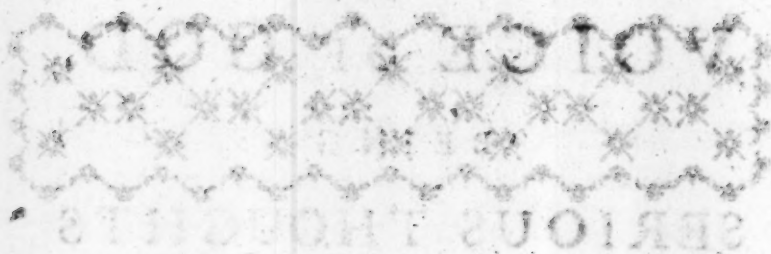
By a Friend to our happy ESTABLISHMENT in
C H U R C H and S T A T E.

Christians
SIRS, YE ARE BRETHREN: WHY DO YE WRONG
ONE TO ANOTHER? Acts vii. 26.

L O N D O N:

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SERIOUS THOUGHTS, &c.

HERE is no sensible, reflecting Christian heart, in all his Majesty's dominions, that does not bleed at the dreadful prospect opened to us by the unnatural civil war in which this nation (so renowned amongst foreigners for its peculiar moderation and good sense) is at present involved with the American colonies;—a war which may scarcely be considered in a better light than that of self-murder, as the loss of every life that falls in it may at least be accounted the loss of a valuable branch of the community by one of its own hands, as well as a diminution of our natural strength; to which may be added the immense detriment sustained by the numerous ma-

manufacturers and commercial interest of both, but especially to the British empire, on various accounts; to say nothing of the pleasure it must afford our jealous and invidious enemies and rivals, the neighbouring naval powers, who rejoice to see us take the sword out of their hands to sheath it in our own bowels; and will, if Providence prevent not, when they perceive us to be sufficiently weakened, embrace the opportunity to plunder and distress us.

This alarming commotion has been the subject of much altercation, acrimony, and invective, on both sides; and perhaps each party, in their turns, through an impetuous, misguided zeal, may have been carried beyond the bounds of truth, and the real nature of the case. And we may venture to assert, that if Christian temper, moderation, and that divine precept which exhorts us to do all to the glory of God, and to follow peace with all men, had been duly attended to and observed, the present melancholy scene had never been exhibited to our view, but, on the contrary, a reciprocal friendship, together with a commercial correspondence highly

highly advantageous to both parties, would have still subsisted between us.

If, as the Americans, and many of their friends and others here, affirm with confidence, our present rulers consist chiefly of a set of men firmly attached to the abjured race of the Stuarts, and who have been represented, during the whole course of this reign, as endeavouring to extend the prerogative of the crown beyond its due limits, to the prejudice of the other two component parts of the constitution,—and, in consequence, by a corrupt and profuse administration of affairs, sport with the just rights of the people—attempt to render the King (and likewise themselves by a parliamentary majority) absolute dictators over the whole nation, to the total ejection of the dissenting revolutionary interest, whom the Americans consider as the unbiased and hearty friends of the present illustrious reigning family, and as most zealously attached to the maintenance of that just equilibrium in the state, which our happy constitution is so wisely calculated to preserve without partiality, and with a view to the general and per-

manent welfare and prosperity of the whole, upon principles evidently tending to promote the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty on a firm basis to each member of the body politic.— If, I say, it be true, that men of this arbitrary and obnoxious cast have for so long time, and do at present, as they maintain, hold the reins of government, effects the most fatal to the happiness and peace of this nation and its dependencies, will inevitably ensue, and, as has been experienced in former reigns, where this sort of governors have had the ascendant, matters will degenerate from bad to worse.—Should this be the present case (which Heaven avert!) I hope it will please God to give our Sovereign wisdom to discern his pretended friends from his real friends and foes, to remove the wicked from his presence, that his throne may be established in righteousness.

With respect to the colonists, we find that the ancestors of the present settlers quitted England, the place of their nativity, early in the last century, and fled from persecution to the country they now inhabit, as to an asylum, where they

they might enjoy that liberty of conscience which was denied them in England, on account of the restrictions enjoined in the act of conformity, obliging ministers of dissenting congregations to adhere to the modes of worship established in the national church, by which severe law many of those ministers were ejected, notwithstanding they were distinguished both for learning and piety, and whose emigration to America drew great numbers of their flock after them, which laid the first foundation of that flourishing colony's population. In process of time, the inhabitants, by their prodigious increase and unwearied industry, have raised that once inhospitable and almost barren spot into that opulent state wherein we now find it, and whose usefulness to the parent country, as well as individuals, has been for many years happily and uninterruptedly experienced by us—Happy for both, had so invaluable a blessing been continued to the latest posterity!

We are far, very far from justifying all the proceedings taken by these (perhaps in a measure deluded) people, and cannot undertake to

vindicate some of their actions at the commencement of the quarrel now subsisting; but must remark, that it would be more becoming men and christians, to ascribe the lawless outrages committed by the more turbulent part of them to the first ebullitions of the ungovernable fury of the unthinking rabble (which in all countries are the same) than to consider them as the acts of the more sober, sensible, and reflecting part (who express their detestation of them) and punish them accordingly.—It would, I humbly apprehend, have derogated nothing from the parent to have patiently, coolly, and dispassionately treated with these her high-spirited, refractory children, and, by a rational remonstrance, to have set forth the reasonableness and necessity of their contributing a proportionable quota to the expences of government—and to make it appear to their satisfaction and that of the public, that it was not inconsistent with the tenor of their charter so to do, nor with the Authority of the British Parliament to make such requisition.—But alas! it is shocking to humanity, and abhorrent to christianity, to see, that in the place of mild means, an English senate

senate should adopt, in a manner, the cruel pro-
scription of the Romans against their Carthagi-
nian competitors, *Delenda est Carthago*, q. d.
America must be destroyed.—Thus by forcible
and violent measures, such as desolation and de-
population, causing the means to frustrate the
very ends they were intended to promote and
accomplish.—The good Lord convince the ag-
gressors (whoever they may be) of their error,
humble proud spirits, and give them repentance
unto life before it is too late, that they may not
have to answer, at the great day of account,
for the various complicated miseries this mis-
chievous war has already occasioned, and may
still be productive of.

As many of the unwarrantable proceedings of
the Americans, in the beginning of their oppo-
sition, are not to be defended, but are greatly
culpable, though as observed before, they were
the effects of a thoughtless impetuosity; so
much less are the hostilities they are now per-
petrating excuseable, although it must at the
same time be allowed that persons of misinformed

judgments are frequently impelled, for want of mature deliberation and forethought, from one act of desperation to another, till extremities are pushed to an enormous length. In this light we may consider the present melancholy crisis. But it must nevertheless be observed, that the degrading epithets from time to time fixed upon the Americans in the public prints, are not only unjust in the authors of them, but would be dishonourable to the best cause: for what can be more unreasonable and absurd than to brand a whole body of people (who are part of ourselves, though living in another quarter of the world) with cowardice, when it is notorious, that in the capture of Cape Breton from the French in 1745, they displayed such an admirable degree of courage, activity and resolution, as astonished the whole world? Nor has even their religion escaped the defamation and malignity of the foulest pens, as they are universally stigmatized with the odious appellations of *canting hypocrites* and *dissemblers*. Now though it is a lamentable truth, that amongst all professors of religion, there are too many who only assume the mask

for

for sinister or secular ends, yet it is unmanly and uncharitable to the last degree, to reprobate such a multitude of people for the faults and defects of some; when at the same time it is well known that their principles and tenets are the same with the greatest part of the dissenters here, and that amongst both there are many persons eminent for piety, probity, and an exemplary life and conversation. But it is more than probable, that those who are so ready to calumniate others indiscriminately on the score of religion, have little or no experimental knowledge of real vital christianity themselves, and it is also a shrewd sign they have as little of that fear of God which produces an humbling sight of their own corrupt hearts.

Having thus far disclosed my sentiments with regard to the contending parties, and the ground of their unhappy differences, in the most moderate and conciliatory terms I am capable of, I shall proceed to the prosecution of the main and primary end of this publication, which was to shew, what effects such a dreadful calamity should have on the minds of persons pro-

fessing christianity, what improvement they
 should make of it in a way of deep humiliation
 at a throne of grace, and by intercession for
 others, and with what earnestness all ranks of
 people should supplicate the God of all wisdom
 and mercy to direct them to proper means for
 removing so heavy an evil, and for restoring
 harmony and a right understanding amongst us,
 and that to this end the king and parliament
 may be disposed to seek for and listen to terms
 for effecting a lasting and honourable accom-
 modation: for as the continuance of this bitter
 animosity must needs be heinously offensive in
 the sight of God, and is certainly one of his
 sorest judgments, is diametrically opposite to
 the spirit of our holy peaceful religion, and
 utterly subvertive of that brotherly love and
 unity which servants of the same Lord, the
 meek and lowly Jesus, subjects of the same king,
 and whom a happy situation for promoting their
 mutual temporal interests connects, should
 cherish and bear to each other.—So also must
 it greatly scandalize us to our civil and religious

ene-

enemies, and afford us ample reason to adopt the language of our celebrated poet:

————— O what are these?
 Death's Ministers, not men ! who thus deal death
 Inhumanly to men : and multiply
 Ten thousand-fold the sin of him who slew
 His brother : for, of whom such massacre
 Make they, but of their brethren ; men, of men?

And again,
 O shame to men ! Devils with devils damn'd.
 Firm concord hold ; men only disagree
 Of creatures rational, tho' under hope
 Of heav'nly Grace : and, G O D. proclaiming
 peace,
 Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
 Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
 Wasting the earth, each other to destroy !
 As if (which might induce us to accord)
 Man had not enemies enow besides,
 Who day and night for his destruction wait.

MILTON's Par. Lost.

The

The present quarrel may not improperly be compared to that between the Israelites and their younger brother Benjamin, one belonging to which tribe had been guilty of a shocking outrage against a Levite, by abusing his wife, so as to occasion her death. This atrocious and horrid deed being represented to the Israelites with all its aggravating circumstances, and the dead body divided into twelve pieces being sent to the other tribes, they were beyond measure exasperated against their brethren, and determined to revenge the insult. Accordingly, before they drew the sword, they asked counsel of God (*as we should have done*) saying, "Which of us shall go up to battle against the children of Benjamin?" Now although the Lord, the history tells us, consented to their going to war; yet, whether there was a reprehensible and vindictive spirit discerned in the Israelites, *flushed perhaps with the thoughts of their numbers and power*, or whether their precipitate conduct, or even the nature of the contest itself, displeased God, as the parties disagreeing were branches of the same family, and sub-
ject

ject to the same theocratical government—we do not pretend to decide : thus much is certain, that the superior forces of the Israelites were defeated in the first onset ; and though they afterwards proved victorious, yet the fruits of their victory was matter rather of grief than joy to the conquerors, who afterwards went to the house of God, wept sore, and lamented before him, that there was a tribe that day lost, “ and they repented for Benjamin their brother” (see the whole relation in Judges xix.—xxi.) Equally disastrous, if not infinitely worse, will the catastrophe of the dreadful dispute now depending between England and America be, if the reconciliation so ardently wished for does not soon take place.

But on which side soever the scale of strict impartial justice, with regard to the present national broil, may preponderate, I will humbly presume, that every dutiful subject, who is well-affected to our amiable Sovereign, and who consequently wishes and prays for the welfare and prosperity of every part of his extensive
domi-

dominions, will join with me in hoping, that such measures will speedily be pursued, and such steps be taken, as will tend, not to widen the already too-far extended breach, but by all possible means, and in the most effectual manner, to reconcile the contending parties, by proposing such terms of reconciliation, and making such concessions, as may put a stop to the further effusion of human blood, be honourable to this country, and not incompatible with the prosperity and freedom of the American colonies.— But while I wish for so desirable an event, I cannot but lament that any should so far forget their character as men and Christians, as, by their inflammatory appeals to the public, to invent obstacles (especially those who profess to be ambassadors of the Prince of Peace)—But as the production alluded to has been proved to be, in its most essential parts, an unfair plagiarism, obtruded under the sanction of a popular name, I shall say no more on that head, than, May God convince that writer of his error!

But

But to conclude, Where ought we, as Christians, to apply for a remedy and assistance under these afflictive circumstances? Instead of trusting solely to an arm of flesh, should we not in the first place make an earnest and humble application to that God who sitteth in the heavens, beholdeth all the inhabitants of the earth, and pondereth the ways of the children of men, without whose special permission the most trivial occurrences cannot happen, and whose overruling providence governs all events? It certainly behoves every one for himself to examine his own heart, and to search diligently his own spirit, whether he is not at this present moment in actual rebellion against the King of kings, whose power is infinite, and whose wrath will burn like an oven against those who resist his will, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.—He has already suffered the devouring sword to be drawn amongst us, which has, alas, been sheathed in the bowels of multitudes of our useful countrymen, many of whom perhaps may have departed this world to appear at the bar of inexorable justice, with all their
 sins,

sins and imperfections on their heads, unpardoned, unredeemed, unsanctified, unprepared for the awful period.—And if we look at the nation in the gross, do not it's many and aggravated sins cry aloud to Heaven for vengeance and for judgment without mercy! contempt of God, profanation of his name, blasphemy, lewdness, injustice, oppression, rejecting Christ, and opposition to the purity, power and practice of his holy religion, deluge the land, and are dangerous provocations and preparatives for the heaviest and most ruinous judgments.

Is it not therefore astonishing, that in a country called Christian, for a series of years crowned with innumerable distinguished blessings, though at present labouring under the dolorous calamity of a civil war, pregnant with the most horrid consequences affecting both lives and property, and all that is dear to Englishmen, no day or time of public fasting and humiliation should be appointed by authority, to try if peradventure God will avert his deserved judgments, and deprecate the evils which still hang over our heads,

heads; that he may not inflict, or suffer them to fall upon us! Is it that we think ourselves independent of Omnipotence, and trust in our own arm for deliverance? The Americans, it seems, have appointed several fasts on this mournful occasion, which proves that there is at least some fear of God, and an eye to his power, amongst them, and we will charitably hope, and believe, many a worthy sincere Christian, howsoever ignorant and malevolent persons may brand them with opprobrious names.—But if no such day should be set apart, I trust all serious persons will, both in their Assemblies and in private, offer up their importunate requests to God for the peace of our Jerusalem, and that our national sins may be purged by the blood of Christ, who is the only atoning sacrifice, so that iniquity may not prove our present and eternal ruin.

It is the earnest and warmest wish, I will be bold to say, of the best and greatest part of his Majesty's subjects, that he would be graciously pleased to think and judge for himself, and
calmly

calmly to consider, whether the ruinous steps so hastily taken with respect to their American brethren and fellow-subjects are well advised or concerted, or can in the end procure either the advancement of the interest, honour, or happiness of these realms.—Forasmuch as, (with all humility and deference it is presumed) that the generality of the people inhabiting that vast continent are, from principle, of the most loyal dispositions towards his Majesty and his illustrious house, and bear a cordial and inalienable affection to their fellow-subjects on this side the Atlantic.

As the two houses of parliament are now about to meet, it is earnestly and seriously requested of all serious persons professing godliness as they fear God, honour the king, and wish for the peace, prosperity, and happiness of their country, that they unite their prayers to almighty God, that he will in mercy to these kingdoms, for which he has wrought such wonderful deliverances in times past, and still, notwithstanding our daily numberless provocations,

continues to preserve us, and bless us with all temporal and spiritual blessings——let each and every one, I say, who are christians indeed and not in name only, be instant in prayer to the God and Father of our dear Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, that he will graciously point out to our great and guiding men in the senate such suitable expedients for putting a stop to the further shedding the blood of our brethren and fellow-subjects as may consist with the dignity of the king and nation, and that they may be endued with such temper and moderation, as to consult what means may be most proper to be used for re-establishing unanimity, good-will, and a mutual and cordial intercourse between all the members of our divided empire:—and that he will put it into the hearts of the Americans, so far to relax from their pretensions, and relinquish all pertinacious opposition, as may be conducive to effectuate the above desirable event.—And that all in general may approve themselves a people fearing God and working righteousness, and be made chearfully and willingly submissive to the laws and legal authority; striving by our utmost

most efforts, and on all occasions, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to advance the honour of God, adorn his religion, discourage and suppress vice both in ourselves and others, and to promote the temporal, spiritual, and eternal happiness of each individual, till time shall be no more, and at length have an abundant entrance administered to us into the kingdom of glory! Which unspeakable blessings may God of his infinite mercy grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Os. 24.

CHRISTIANUS.